

## WELLFLEET CENTER IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE 335 Main Street - Reuse Options



*Prepared for:* Town of Wellfleet

*Prepared by:* The Cecil Group

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## Introduction

This memorandum is a summary of the existing conditions and regulatory framework that will determine to a great extent the redevelopment potential and reuse options for 335 Main Street in Wellfleet. The Town of Wellfleet is seeking to redevelop this property, which occupies a prime location within the town center area. This memorandum also describes findings from a site capacity analysis that served to identify four potential reuse options, and a series of steps that need to be taken in order to initiate the redevelopment process.

First established as a church and rectory, the site was purchased by the Town in 2001 and is currently vacant. The original buildings remain on the site. An associated parcel is located across the street, and is currently used as public parking to support Town Hall and other Main Street businesses.

In 2002 the Town hired the firm of Michael Rosenfeld, Inc., Architects, to prepare a feasibility study and preliminary design for reuse of the property. The study served to identify a community center, and elderly/affordable housing as the preferred uses for the existing buildings. However, a community consensus around the best reuse option has been difficult to reach, and the Town would like to explore other alternatives within the context of the surrounding area. The downtown has lost some year-round businesses and services that used bring people to Main Street.

This study is funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

## Review of Town Goals and Objectives

The Cecil Group met with Town and community representatives last June to review overall goals and objectives for redevelopment of the site. The Town would like to use the site as an opportunity to increase the level of year-round activity in the downtown, and to attract more residents and visitors to the town center. The following is a summary of the key points made at the meeting:

- The Town would not want to become a developer; it will most likely issue a development Request-for-Proposals (RFP)
- Part of the RFP objectives could be finding out what the private sector would see as feasible reuse options
- The Town would ideally avoid incurring in any significant expenses to redevelop the site
- The bank that owns the adjacent property has made a proposal to use part of the site for a drive-through lane and parking; the Town would like to evaluate this option in light of other potential alternatives
- The Town and any prospective owner/developer will need to work with conservation groups to achieve the right balance of uses and natural cover for the grounds
- The site is immediately adjacent to a wetlands area, and compliance with wetlands regulation is a key consideration
- Senior/affordable housing could still be considered as an option that would bring year-round activity to the town center
- There also is need for affordable housing for young people
- It would be desirable to retain the existing church building; the rectory and other accessory structures on the site could be replaced
- The grounds behind the church have been used by the community to stage local festivals and events with great success
- Septic system will need upgrading; there is a potential for a cluster system along Main Street in the long run

## Regulatory Framework

Two sets of regulations establish the main controls on the type and dimensions of redevelopment that may occur on the site – zoning and environmental protection.

### Zoning

The Wellfleet Zoning By-law includes an extensive list of uses that are allowed in the Central District, where the site is located. The following *permitted uses* have been selected from the list as being the most relevant or having the potential to attract residents and visitors on a year-round basis (in alphabetical order):

- Affordable Accessory Dwelling (by special permit)
- Antique Shop/Art Gallery (by special permit)
- Bed and Breakfast
- Gift or Craft Shop (by special permit)
- Government Facilities
- Office, Business (by special permit)
- Personal Services (Business) (by special permit)
- Public and Semi-public Institutions of an Historic, Philanthropic or Charitable Nature
- Religious Institutions
- Retail Trade (by special permit)

The following *dimensional requirements* apply:

- Front Setback: 25 feet
- Side Setback: 20 feet
- Rear Setback: 25 feet
- Maximum Building Coverage: 15%
- Maximum Height of Building: 2 stories or 28 feet

*Parking requirements* relevant to the uses listed above include:

- Stores – Retail Business – Office – Banks and Similar Business: one space per each 150 square feet of floor area, plus one space for each three employees or nearest multiple thereof
- Residential Areas – 1.5 spaces per apartment unit

- Bed and Breakfast – Two parking spaces plus one space for each bedroom
- Theater, Places of Assembly – One space for each four seats
- Restaurants, Places Serving Food or Beverages - One space for each four seats plus one space for each three employees or nearest multiple thereof

The following *significant provisions* also apply:

- Up to three affordable accessory dwelling units per lot may be allowed in any district by Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals
- Affordable accessory dwelling units may be located within or attached to a principal structure, a garage or constructed as a detached unit
- Affordable accessory dwelling units shall not be larger than one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet of Livable Floor Area
- Newly constructed detached accessory units shall comply with all setback requirements

#### Environmental Protection Regulations

These regulations are promulgated by the Town of Wellfleet Conservation Commission in order to protect public environmental interests and values, such as public and private water supply, ground water quality, flood control, storm damage prevention, fisheries, wildlife habitat, etc. These regulations complement zoning, and designate wetlands and wetland resource areas as being under their jurisdiction. Areas subject to protection include all land within 100 feet of any freshwater wetland (referred to as the “Buffer Zone”).

335 Main Street is immediately adjacent to the edge of a wetlands area, and as a result approximately 90% of the parcel is estimated to be located within a Buffer Zone. Based on the available information. Consequently, any activity proposed or undertaken that may result in removing, filling, or otherwise altering such area is subject to jurisdiction and will require undergoing a process of application for permit or variance. Part of the requirements includes an analysis of reasonable alternatives for the proposed activity that may be undertaken with less adverse impacts.

*Environmental requirements* include:

- The erection, reconstruction or expansion of any buildings or structures; the driving of pilings; the construction or improvement of roadways and other ways; the changing of run-off characteristics; the installation of drainage, sewage and water systems; the destruction of plant life, and any other change of the physical characteristics of the land are considered as activities.
- The Buffer Zone includes a “50-foot Filter Strip”, which refers to the area of land extending 50 feet horizontally outward from the boundary of any area subject to jurisdiction (wetlands in this case)
- A permit may be issued for work in the Buffer Zone provided that the applicant has examined all practicable alternatives that will further minimize

impacts, and demonstrated that all impacts will be properly mitigated (this includes projects involving demolition of an existing structure and reconstruction)

- Within the Buffer Zone, total alteration of up to 5,000 square feet subject to the following:
  - The calculation of the total land alteration will include the total area of the lot within the Buffer Zone that is currently altered or developed, including yards and lawns, and any area where the vegetation is to be removed or soils disturbed
  - At a minimum, a 50-foot area of undisturbed vegetation is provided between the wetland resource area and the work
  - On previously developed or disturbed sites, all work proposed within the Buffer Zone shall result in an improvement of the existing conditions
- New and/or expanded lawn areas, new structures, and the expansion of existing structures are prohibited within the 50-foot Filter Strip

#### Summary of Regulatory Constraints

*Current zoning does not allow residential use on the site except by affordable accessory dwelling units (up to three) or bed and breakfast. Wetlands regulations limit changes in the natural physical conditions of the site to a maximum of 5,000 square feet for most of the lot area. This limit includes areas already developed or disturbed, which strongly reduces the possibilities of changing or altering portions of the site other than the areas already built, unless acceptable mitigation is done.*

## Site Capacity and Reuse Options

Taking into consideration the Town's goals and the limits set by regulations, the following is a preliminary list of tentative uses that may be considered for redevelopment (in addition to the program already advanced by the 2001 feasibility study):

- Community Center
- Small Retail Store(s), Shop(s), Art Gallery
- Professional Offices, Personal Services (Business)
- Affordable Accessory Dwellings
- Bed and Breakfast
- Religious, Historic, Philanthropic or Charitable Institution
- Public Outdoor Sitting Area, Pocket-Park
- Accessory Parking

Residential uses other than the ones already mentioned (such as market rentals or condominiums) and restaurants would require a zoning variance.

Mixed use options that combine two or more of the uses listed may also be considered, subject to the footprint and access limitations set by the Environmental Protection Regulations. The Buffer Zone limit threshold for permissible alteration poses a significant constraint to new construction since the existing buildings and pavement footprint already approximate the 5,000 square feet mark by themselves.

Another important consideration to take into account in exploring site reuse options are the advantages/disadvantages of retaining or demolishing any of the existing buildings and site improvements, both in terms of financial feasibility and local perceptions of identity. Market trends have not been considered as part of this analysis, except in very general terms.

Based on the conditions described, four potential reuse options are proposed, which include mainly commercial and residential uses. Options 1 and 2 consider reuse of the church building itself as a community center and meeting space for the Town. All of the options propose public access to the rear lawn for passive recreation and community events.

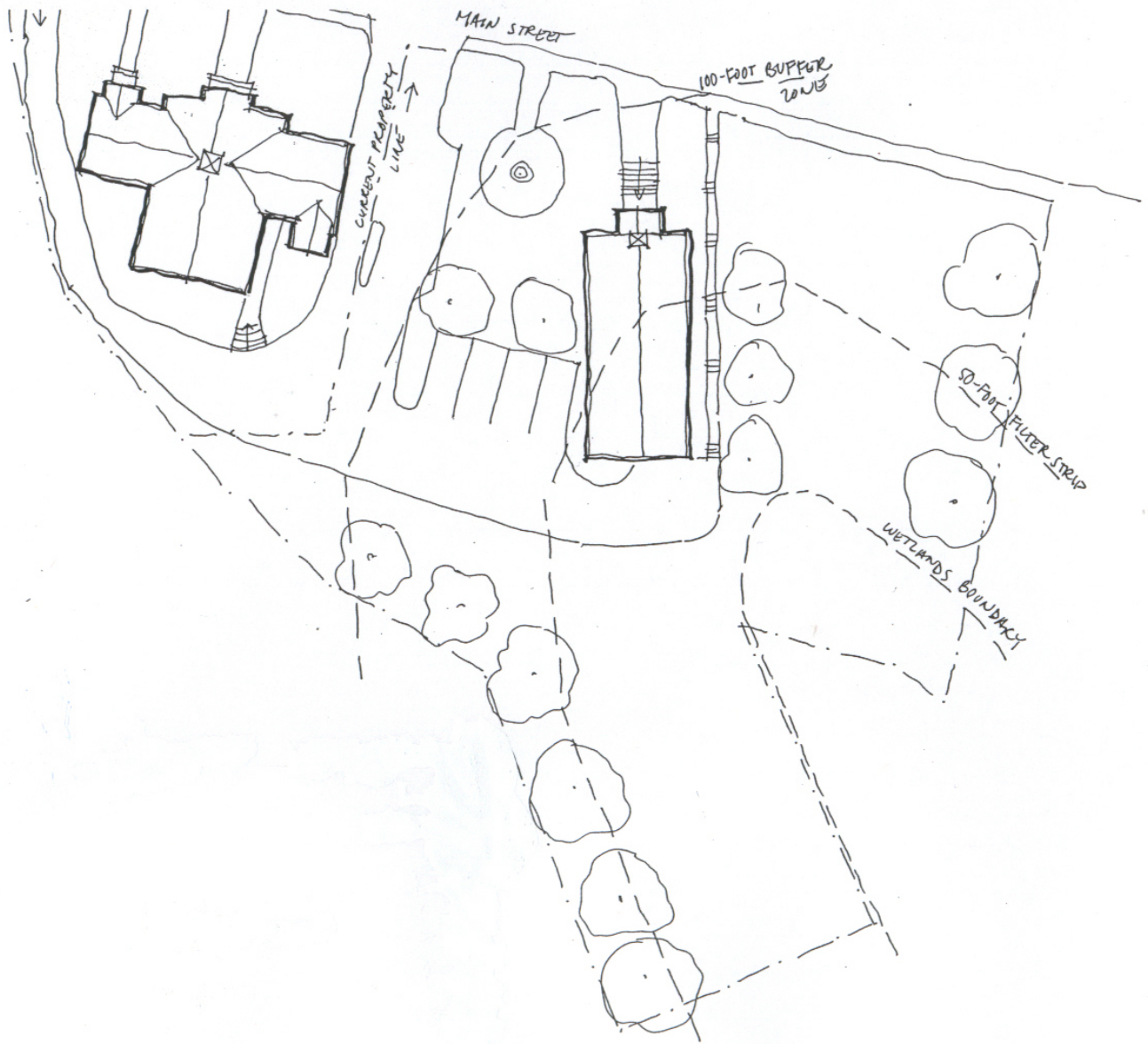


### Option 1

This option assumes purchase or long-term lease of the site by the adjacent bank company for expansion of bank operations and/or community space. The church building would be retained and reused for bank offices or community-oriented uses, such as a community center or meeting rooms. Most of the parking for new uses would be located on the accessory parcel across the street.

<b>Building/Site Component</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Potential Reuse</b>	<b>Volume/ Capacity</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Former Church Building	Retain	Community center/meeting rooms	3,500 sq. ft.	Over 25 parking spaces needed across the street depending on number of members or seats
Rectory Building	Demolish	Drive-through ATM lane, parking, and pocket park	4 Parking Spaces	More than 4 parking spaces on site may not be possible due to 5,000 sq. ft. limit
Lawn in Back of Buildings	Retain	Outdoor community space	7,500 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible
Side Yard along Main Street	Retain	Outdoor community space	9,000 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible

(See diagram on next page)



Site Reuse Option 1

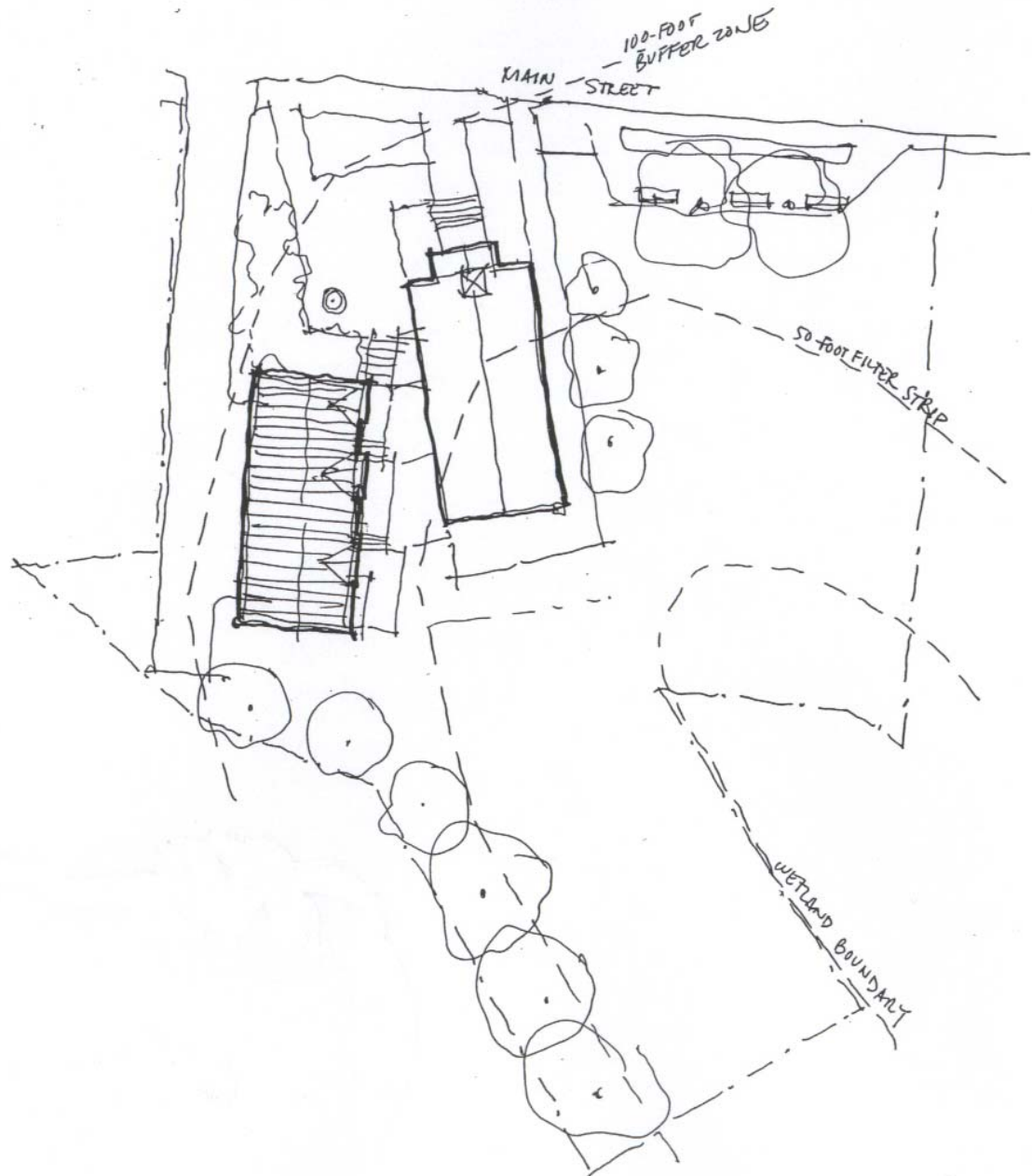
## Option 2

This option assumes redevelopment of the site for a community center/meeting rooms with affordable accessory dwelling units. The church building would be retained and reused for the community center. The key difference between this option and the design solution proposed by the 2001 feasibility study would be in replacing the rectory building with a new building specifically designed for residential uses and residential parking below. Parking for the community center would be located across the street.

<b>Building/Site Component</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Potential Reuse</b>	<b>Volume/Capacity</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Former Church Building	Retain	Community center/meeting rooms	3,500 sq. ft.	Over 25 parking spaces needed across the street depending on number of members or seats
Rectory Building	Replace with New Building	Affordable accessory dwellings	3 to 5 dwelling units	More than 3 dwelling units may require a zoning variance
Lawn in Back of Buildings	Retain	Outdoor community space	7,500 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible
Side Yard along Main Street	Retain	Outdoor community space	9,000 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible

Market residential units may be feasible but would require a zoning variance.

(See diagram on next page)



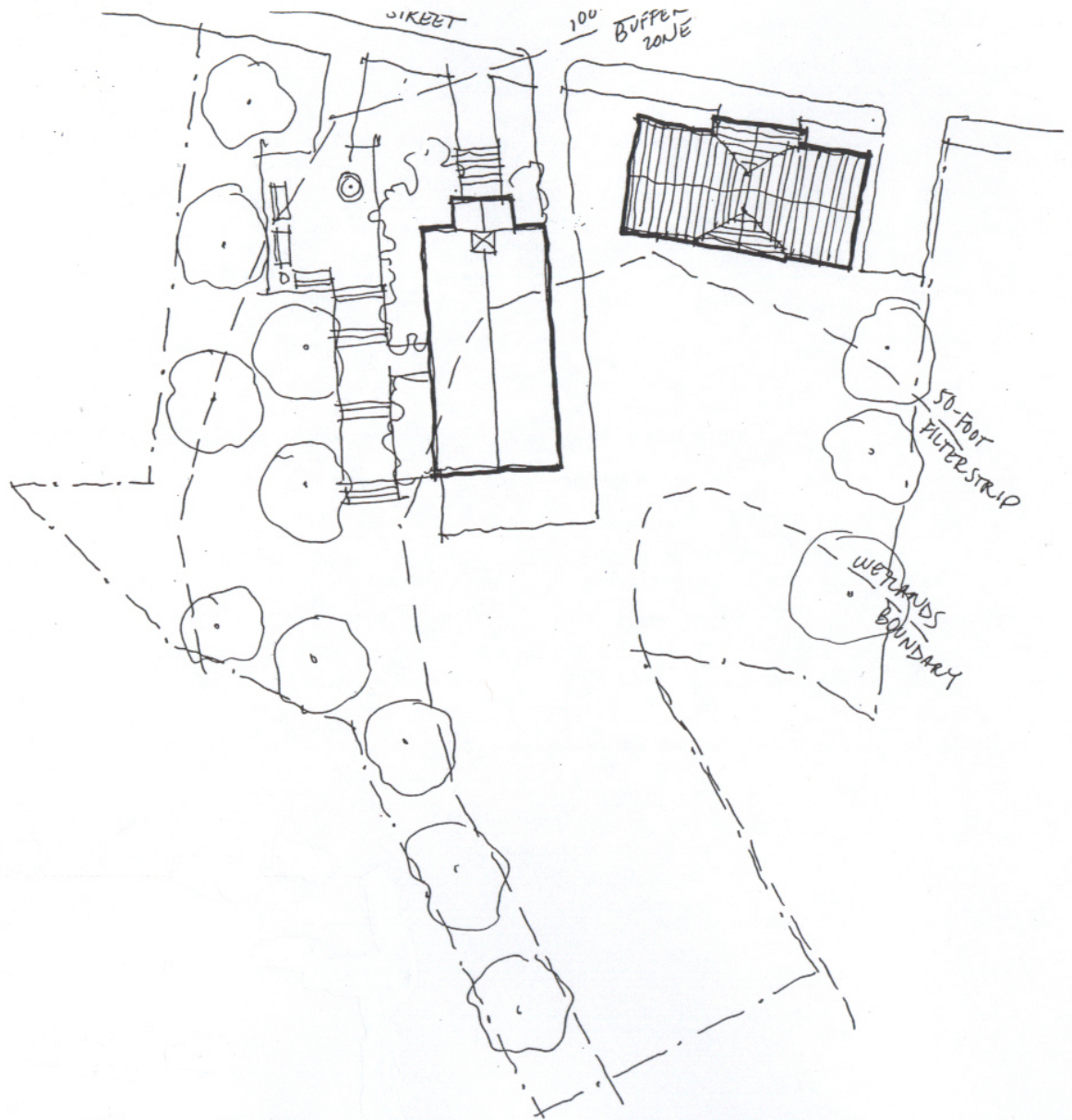
Site Reuse Option 2

### Option 3

This option assumes emphasis on commercial uses, taking advantage of the available frontage and visibility along Main Street. The church building would be retained and reused for retail or business uses (small store(s), shop(s), professional offices). A new retail building would be built on the side yard along Main Street, outside the 50-foot Filter Strip and aligned with the adjacent existing buildings (this would require a waiver of front setback requirements). In order to mitigate/compensate for impacts to the Buffer Zone, the rectory building would be demolished and replaced with a pocket park and landscaped sitting area providing access to the lawn in back of the buildings, and restored vegetation. Parking would be located across the street.

<b>Building/Site Component</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Potential Reuse</b>	<b>Volume/ Capacity</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Former Church Building	Retain	Retail/ business space (store(s), offices)	3,500 sq. ft.	Over 25 parking spaces needed depending on number of employees
Rectory Building	Demolish	Pocket park/ landscaped sitting area	6,000 sq. ft.	Restore natural vegetation to the extent possible
Lawn in Back of Buildings	Retain	Outdoor community space	15,000 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible
Side Yard along Main Street	Construct New Building	Retail use (store, shop, art gallery)	1,500 sq. ft.	Over 10 parking spaces needed depending on number of employees

(See diagram on next page)



Site Reuse Option 3

#### Option 4

This option also assumes emphasis on commercial uses, taking advantage of the prime location of the site within the town center. As a main difference with the previous options, the church building would be demolished in this case, and replaced with an entirely new structure dedicated to retail and business uses (small store(s), shop(s), professional offices). The new building would be located on the footprint of the existing buildings, and outside of the 50-foot Filter Strip. The rest of the site would be attractively landscaped, and public access to the lawn in back of the buildings would be secured as part of deed agreements. The natural conditions and vegetation would be restored on the rest of the site. Parking would be located across the street.

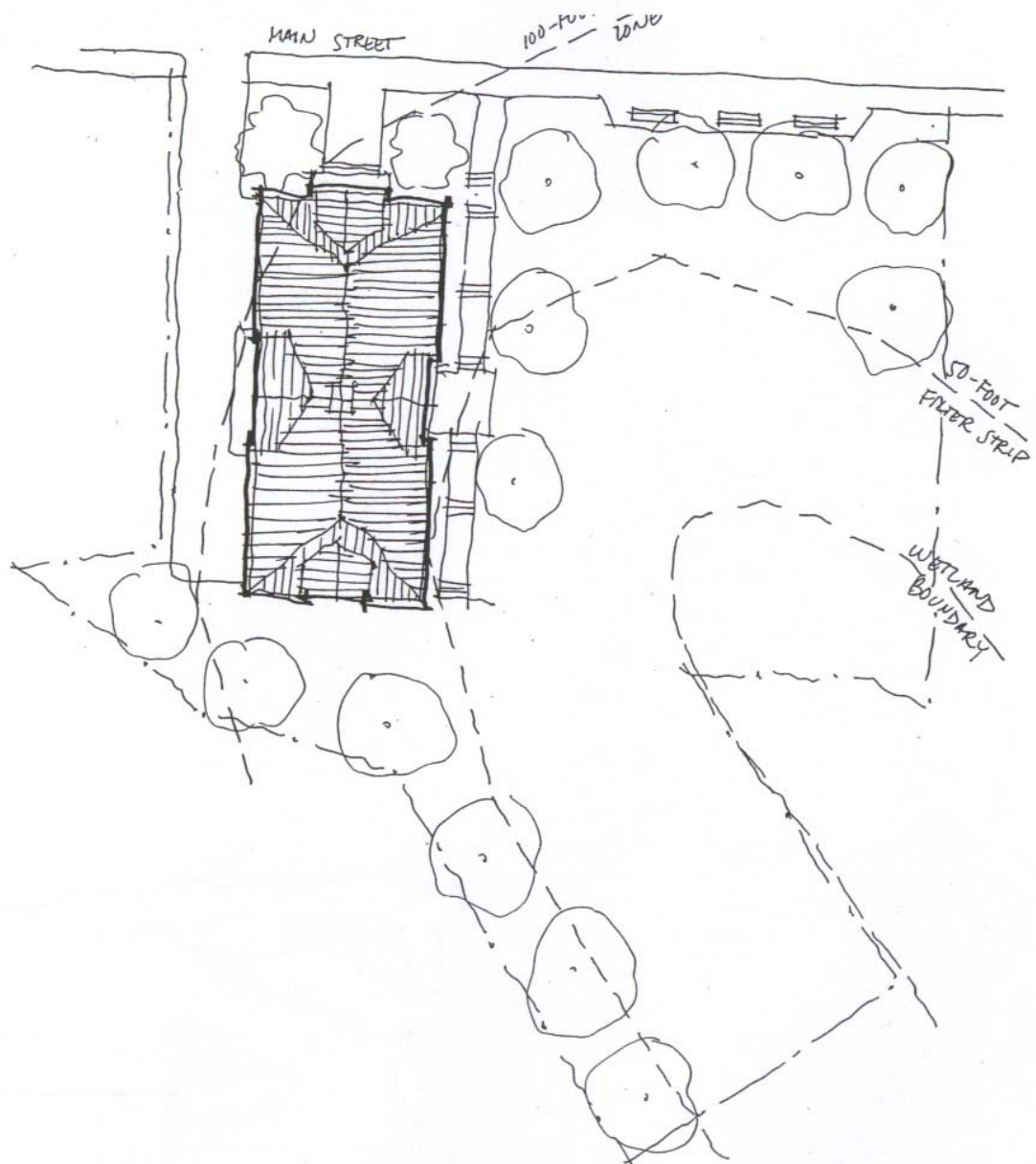
Building/Site Component	Action	Potential Reuse	Volume/ Capacity	Comments
Former Church Building	Demolish	Replace with landscaping and public access to lawn	3,500 sq. ft.	Restore natural vegetation to the extent possible
Rectory Building	Demolish	Replace with new building for retail/ business use	7,500 sq. ft.	Avoid impacts to the 50-foot Filter Strip
Lawn in Back of Buildings	Retain	Outdoor community space	7,500 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible
Side Yard along Main Street	Retain	Outdoor community space	9,000 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible

The site plan concept/diagram represented as Option 4 could also be adapted for residential development of 6 to 8 market dwelling units (rental apartments or condominiums). This would require market support and a zoning use variance. In general, reuse of the church building for residential units has not been considered due to the special character of the interior space, which lends itself towards renovation for commercial use or as a place of assembly.

(See diagram on next page)

Additional site redevelopment options not explored here in terms of site layout may include the renovation of the existing buildings for a Bed and Breakfast, or an appropriate institution such as a church or an educational organization. These options would depend on specific market conditions, and the particular decision of the Town to proceed in that direction if an interested party becomes available.





Site Reuse Option 4



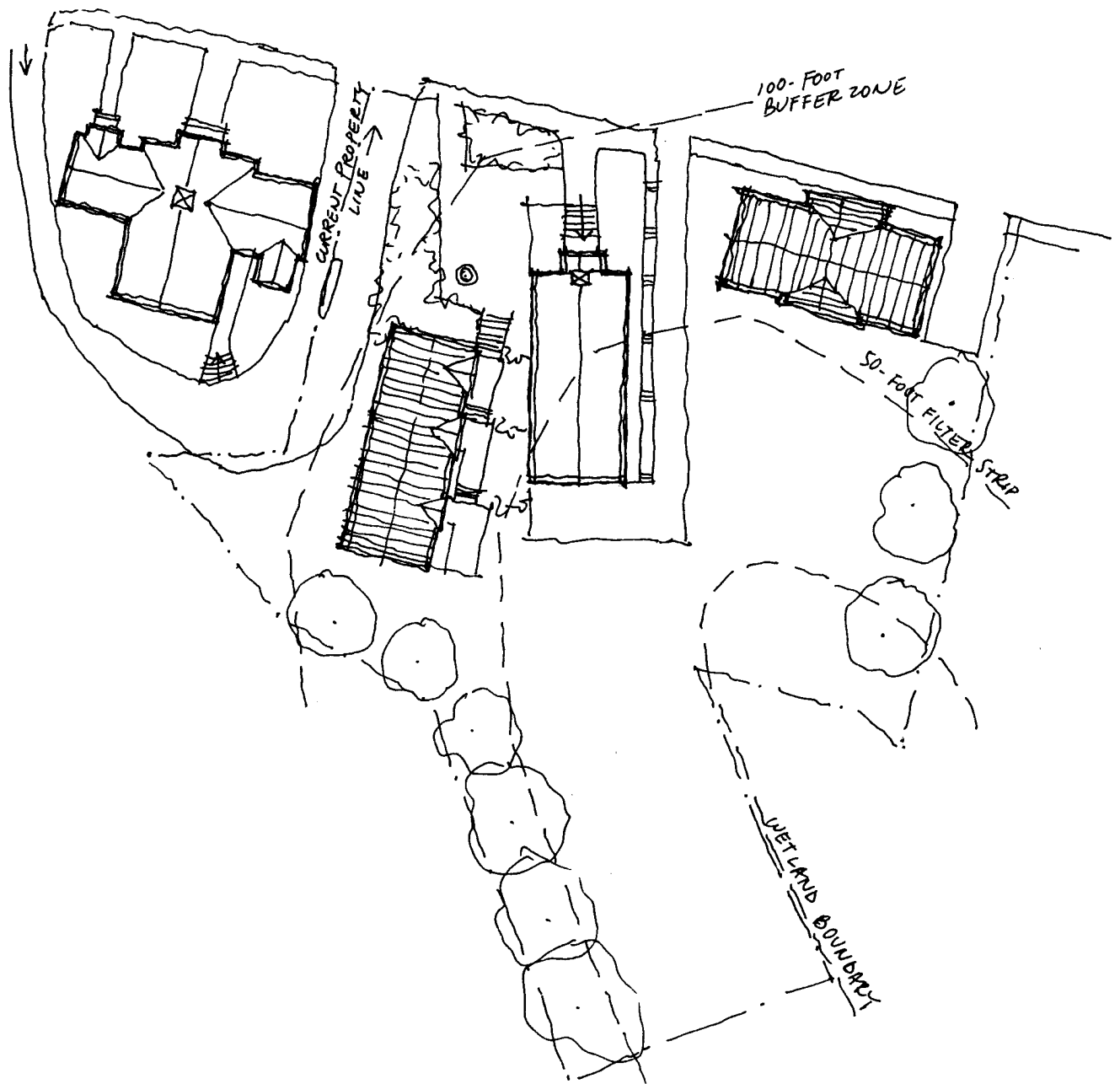
### Option 5

This option assumes purchase, long-term lease, or easement of part of the site by the adjacent bank company for expansion of bank operations (i.e. a two lane drive-through). The former church building would be retained for community oriented uses, such as a community center or meeting rooms. Also in this option a new retail building would be built on the side yard along Main Street, outside the 50-foot filter strip and aligned with the adjacent existing buildings (this would require a waiver of front setback requirements). The demolition of the rectory would allow for additional development or installation of a park. The setback requirements for a new building where the rectory stands will be determined by its use: residential or retail.

We realize that the zone of contribution for wells in this area prohibits development on the side yard along Main Street at this time.

Building/Site Component	Action	Potential Reuse	Volume/Capacity	Comments
Former Church Building	Retain	Community center/meeting rooms	3,500 sq. ft.	Over 25 parking spaces needed across the street, depending on number of members or seats
Rectory Building	Demolish	Two lane drive-through, and residential or retail/offices	2,500 sq. ft. (2 stories)	No additional parking spaces on site, spaces needed across the street
Lawn in Back of Buildings	Retain	Outdoor community space	7,500 sq. ft.	Avoid alterations, restore to the extent possible
Side Yard along Main Street	Construct new building	Retail use (store, shop, gallery, offices)	1,500 sq. ft.	Over 10 parking spaces needed, depending on number of employees

(See diagram on next page)



Site Reuse Option 5

## Next Steps

The following is an outline of proposed next steps for implementation:

Action/Step	Timeline	Comments
1. Obtain Selectmen's approval for next steps	November 2004	
2. Initiate grant application process to obtain funding for detailed planning prior to preparing a Development Request-for-Proposals (RFP)	December 2004	
3. Advance conversations with bank to confirm their interest on acquiring or leasing part of the property	Winter 2005	
4. Initiate contacts with the Wellfleet Conservation Commission to review wetlands protection requirements and eligibility for a permit	Winter 2005	On an informal basis
5. Initiate conversations regarding planning issues for a small cluster (wastewater) system	Winter 2005	On an informal basis
6. Conduct a market evaluation and pro-forma analysis to assess financial feasibility	Spring 2005	After grant is secured
7. Create planning and design criteria to guide the redevelopment process	Spring 2005	After grant is secured
8. Involve the community into the planning and review process	Spring 2005	
9. Advance regulatory and other necessary approvals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proposed zoning changes regarding use, setbacks, etc.</li> <li>– Draft use agreements</li> <li>– Shared parking agreements</li> <li>– Conditions for wastewater treatment/disposal</li> </ul>	Spring 2005	
10. Prepare and issue a Development Request-for-Proposals (RFP)	Summer 2005	
11. Create a process to use the proceeds of the lease/sale to improve public access and amenities	Summer 2005	Prior to selecting a developer
12. Select a developer and initiate the process of land/property disposition	Summer/Fall 2005	

Applying for grant funding to carry on market analysis and detailed design studies that will serve to refine the potential development program is key. A deeper understanding of development opportunities and restrictions will lead to the production of a more focused Request-for-Proposals, which in turn will result in the submission of better and more accurate responses from developers.

### Grant Application Process

The CDBG's Ready Resource Fund (RRF) program of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has been established to finance economic development projects in cities and towns. These include projects that create or retain jobs, improve the tax base, and enhance the quality of life in the community. Wellfleet is one of the towns eligible for this type of assistance.

The range of activities supported by the program includes planning and pre-development studies, with a \$50,000 cap on all planning grants, inclusive of planning related administration.

Securing one of these grants would provide funding for hiring a team of planning and design professionals, market and real estate economists, and legal consultants that would assist the Town through the process of identifying potential developers, marketing opportunities, and development constraints.

Applying for an RRF grant is a two-step process:

1. Submitting an Application Information Form (AIF) and attending an informational meeting with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) staff. The community will be invited later on to submit a formal application if the proposed project appears to meet all the program requirements.
2. Submitting a full application within three (3) months of the date of the invitation letter.

An application must meet the following thresholds for consideration and approval:

1. Ready Resource Fund program threshold
  - Economic development activity
2. Massachusetts CDBG program thresholds
  - Eligibility
  - National objective
  - Timely commitment and expenditure
  - Displacement of non-CDBG funds
  - Executive Order 418 Certification
  - Sustainable development principles
  - Public benefit standards
  - Community-based planning requirement

### Additional Recommendations

- Make redevelopment of this important site one of the Town's first priorities.
- Continue working with the project steering committee in order to ensure a consistent and successful stewardship along the entire redevelopment process.